

11 Small Business Website Don'ts

1. **Have your cousin create your website** Your cousin might be a great person, but unless he is a professional web designer, he is likely to create a website that is almost unusable for first time visitors.
2. **Leave Under Construction pages** Back in 1996 it was common to have Under Construction pages on websites, but nowadays it makes a website look unprofessional. Don't link unfinished pages to the website until it is done being constructed.
3. **Force visitors to view a splash screen before entering your real website** Customers are looking for information not impressive graphics. If they have to wait 30 seconds to get through your introductory (splash) screen before actually viewing your content then they will leave.
4. **Create confusing navigation** Content is very important, but the best content in the world is useless if customers can't find it. Put your navigation, or list of links, on the top or left-hand side where people are used to finding it on most websites.
5. **Make visitors guess what your business can do for them** If a customer comes to your website and within 20 seconds can't figure out what you can offer them, they WILL leave. On your home page, prominently display the purpose of your business in a few sentences.
6. **Hide your contact information** You want customers to be able to communicate easily with you. If they get frustrated trying to find a way to contact you then they will likely leave your website and go to a competitor.
7. **Fill your website with every piece of information you can think of** Overloading customers with information is a very common mistake. More isn't always better. A clean, easy to read website is more desirable than one cluttered with unnecessary content.
8. **Use Free Web Hosting** Free comes with a cost. Free Hosting adds banners and pop up ads which make your website look cluttered and unprofessional.
9. **Have out of date content** Nothing make a website look more irrelevant then outdated information. It's great that you had a company picnic, but the time and location for it should not be there six months later. Revisit your website often to keep it updated.
10. **Ignore submitting your website to search engines** Even the best designed website is useless to your business unless people can find it. Submit your website to all of the major search engines, such as Google and Bing.
11. **Test your website in only one browser** Unfortunately every browser interprets a website differently. Yours could look great in Safari on a Mac, but look awful in Internet Explorer on a PC.

Paul Pennel is the Owner and Designer for Minnow Web Design. For help making your small business website to be the best it can be visit www.minnowwebdesign.com or call Paul at 314.249.4690.